# THE BATTLE OF THE FLAGS

by

Conrad Noel

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# THE BATTLE
OF THE
# FLAGS
## A STUDY IN CHRISTIAN POLITICS

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR.*

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OF THE
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A STUDY IN CHRISTIAN POLITICS

BY
CONRAD NOEL
VICAR OF THAXTED

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# FOREWORD

My thanks are due to the Editor of *The Church Socialist* for permission to reprint portions of articles which first appeared in its pages and now form, with considerable alterations, Chapters IV and V: to the Editor of *The Guild Socialist* for permission to use for the last chapter extracts from my article entitled "The Revolutionary Flags in Thaxted Church": to my comrade, Harold Mason, for valuable help in preparing this volume for the press.

CONRAD NOEL.

THAXTED.

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# REVOLUTION

THE Revolutions of the Rich against the Poor in the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, by means of which they deprived them of their lands, were accomplished with very little bloodshed.

Revolution, according to the English dictionaries, does not mean bloodshed, but a complete change. Reform means patching up the Capitalist system. Revolution means scrapping it for a new one. If the system is based on generosity and justice, reform is wisdom and revolution folly. If the system is based on greed and injustice, reform is folly and revolution the true wisdom. Even the Archbishop's report on Industrial Problems concludes that the system is based on principles fundamentally opposed to those of Christ. Christians must therefore be not reformists but revolutionists.

Charles Gore, late Bishop of Oxford, speaking at Caxton Hall on February 1, 1912, quoted Christ's denunciations of the rich and His benedictions of the workers and said: "I dare any one of you to say that this was not a revolutionary doctrine. It is only because we are so used to the sound of the words that they can be uttered in any one of our congregations and not seem revolutionary doctrine,

which we have got over again to digest and make our own."

There must therefore be a revolution, and it will be brought about peaceably, if the vested interests will allow it. If blood is shed, the responsibility will rest upon those people who are accustomed to say: "Mow the Miners down," "Drown the Irish," "Shoot all Strikers." We do not want bloodshed. But do they?

# The Battle of the Flags

## CHAPTER I

## THAXTED AND THE FLAGS

Among many flags and banners in Thaxted Church are to be seen the flag of Saint George, the tri-colour of the Irish Nation and the Red Flag of the World's Workers.

There was no opposition over five years ago when these emblems were introduced into the church. They hung there during the Great War Such local opposition as now exists is fomented chiefly by certain middle-class persons who have recently come to the place. The immediate occasion of their resentment was the support given to the locked-out miners in 1921 by the clergy, officials and a large portion of the congregation of the parish church.

The son of a coal-owner complained to the War Office and assured us that in consequence the flags would be officially removed within ten days. Ten years would have been a safer prophecy for any-one acquainted with the usual methods of the War Office, but in any case the appeal was futile, as England is not under martial law.

No one in Thaxted has ever laid hands upon

the flags, but the local opposition invited certain gentlemen from Cambridge University and other places to remove them. This was done several times and with considerable violence: so much so that it called forth an indignant protest from Cambridge undergraduates and tutors, who distributed an apology to the people of Thaxted assuring them that the raiders were by no means representative of the university. This apology was of course suppressed by the "kept" Press. Members of Oxford, Cambridge and other universities offered to come and put up the flags again as often as they were hauled down.

The raids from Cambridge were more or less in the nature of a "rag," but these were followed by other raids by engineers from Chatham and elsewhere, involving damage to Church property, sacrilege and brawling, committed against the express orders of the churchwarden and the local police.

The Bishop of Chelmsford wrote asking me to remove the flags or in conscience to resign, as my action was in direct violation of my oath of allegiance to the King.

But appeals made about this time by a few Thaxted people and a large number of outsiders who alleged themselves to belong to the place[1] were sent to the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary, who both stated in the House of Com-

[1] A counter-statement in favour of the flags was drawn up by the churchwardens of Thaxted and received large support. It was signed *only by residents* and, of course, was duly ignored by the Rich Man's Press.

mons that, much as they regretted it, they could not order the removal of the flags, as these were at present within the law. Their reply could hardly have been otherwise, in face of the fact that the Irish flag is openly carried in procession through the streets of London and is to be seen flying from the roof of the Albert Hall when Irish meetings are in progress. Certain busybodies attempted to secure a conviction against workers for singing "The Red Flag." The magistrates refused to convict, for they knew that many English boroughs, including Bethnal Green, Edmonton and Stepney, flew the Red Flag, and that hundreds of thousands of English people, through their duly elected representatives, have accepted this ensign as their own.

The Bishop of Chelmsford would therefore seem to be inaccurate in charging me with breaking the oath of allegiance to the King, when I do what the King's law allows.

If the Government, yielding to the clamour of the plutocratic Press, attempts to make the flags illegal, it will then become necessary to discuss the exact nature of the oath.

For the oath of allegiance was first imposed in days when the King had a considerable authority and leadership. He has since, wisely or unwisely, been shorn of his power and has become a mere figure-head, with less initiative than the President of the United States. The power has shifted from King to Parliament, from Parliament to Cabinet, and from Cabinet to a small group of financiers

and speculators who are the actual rulers of both England and the Empire to-day.

Whether a republic pure and simple or a crowned republic be the best form of government, it is surely the duty of every patriot, be he royalist or republican, to resist to the utmost this secret gang of interests which is destroying the honour of his country and the reputation of the King. The oath of allegiance would seem to encourage such resistance, if the action of those very mild reformists, the Anglican Bishops, is to be taken as our guide. They have resisted actions of Parliament taken in the King's name and have denounced the actions of the King's forces in Ireland and elsewhere.

The Bishop of Chelmsford was foremost in this righteous resistance to certain acts of "the King." Many Bishops have gone further and have declared for Irish self-determination in opposition to the King's Government, when they stated that on no account would they grant it. *The Nation*,[1] a journal not usually favourable to the Anglican Church, observes: "It is hardly too much to say that for the first time for over three hundred years the Church withstands the State on religious grounds in a matter of moral (not ecclesiastical) policy."

Most of the Bishops are also prepared to resist the King's authority to the utmost in the matter of the marriage laws, basing their rebellion on the ground that their oath of allegiance is modified by their vows to another King. Although Christ's marriage law, on grounds of humanity, is stringent,

[1] May 21, 1921.

He was, as we shall see, far more concerned with the New World and its divine justice than with marriage.

This coming world of justice is in deadly opposition to the kingdoms and empires of this present age, and they themselves recognise it as their deadly enemy.

Should the Government, then, make the flags or the preaching of the principles for which they stand illegal, I should be inclined to interpret the oath of allegiance in the liberal way suggested by the Anglican Bishops and to remember that my oath to the King of England is qualified by my oath to the King of Heaven.

The battle of the flags would be more diverting if the opposition would put up some kind of intellectual fight, but it is hardly possible to answer such arguments as liar, lunatic, pig, blasphemer, devil, even if the gentlemen who use them would remember to give their address. As to the usual crop of threats, ranging from window-smashing of cottages which refuse to fly the Union Jack to flogging, drowning and collective murder, these are the usual methods of the guardians of law and order, but our more thoughtful opponents may feel that if their cause is to be championed by mental bankrupts, it is high time that they reconsidered it.

The least amiable of the newspaper attacks have come from the *Morning Post*, the *Guardian*, the *Church Times* and the *Winning Post*: but more serious is the attitude of the daily Press, who, finding they could not defeat us by fair means, attempted foul, appearing with headlines "Red

Vicar Surrenders," " Vicar hauls down Flags," and for the most part refusing to insert a correction of this slander.

The *Daily Herald* has, of course, championed our cause throughout, as also the organ of the National Union of Police and Prison Officers, whose members have done us good service. The *Daily Chronicle* published a full and generous interview on affairs at Thaxted in the early days of the struggle. The *Daily Express* inserted some kind of contradiction, though in an obscure corner.

The flags have always been replaced within twenty-four hours of every raid and are still prominent in Thaxted Church. It is only fair to add that the opposition have had the grace to respect the truce between England and Ireland and no attack has been made of late.[1] The wardens and church council on July 14, 1921, unanimously advised the retention of the flags, reaffirming the " Christian principles for which they stand."

On their suggestion there is now inscribed across the Red Flag the international motto, " He hath made of one blood all nations."

[1] There was some talk of the eviction of the flags by way of faculty. The law as to faculties seems very confused. Bishops will soon be requiring a faculty for hymnbooks and hassocks ! but many legal authorities look with amazement on the encroaching demands of diocesan chancellors in these matters. It would be as absurd to grant a faculty for the removal of the flags as it would be to demand a faculty for a Sunday-school banner or a Christmas text. While Union Jacks are allowed without faculty in countless churches, the gross unfairness of an attack upon our flags by way of faculty will be obvious to everyone.

CHAPTER II

## THE ORIGIN OF THE FLAG OF SAINT GEORGE AND OF THE UNION JACK.

THE flag of Saint George is the flag of old England: many noble deeds have been done in its shadow, many evil deeds also; but the evil was done in spite of it and when its meaning was forgotten, while the good things were done because of it. For it was chosen hundreds of years ago by our forefathers, at a time when they loved just dealing and freedom. At the close of the twelfth century, when Richard Cœur de Lion returned from the Crusades, in which he had fought valiantly with the name of Saint George on his lips, the people of England adopted "Saint George for merry England" as their watchword and his ensign as their national flag. Whatever moral judgment historians may pass upon the third Crusade, they are mostly agreed that Richard's part in it was great and honourable. "His military genius and prestige gave England something which it kept for four hundred years, and without which it is incomprehensible throughout that period—the reputation of being in the very vanguard of chivalry."[1] We still follow this flag of our fore-

[1] G. K. Chesterton, *A Short History of England*, p. 67; Chatto & Windus, 1917.

fathers, with its great red cross, to remind us of the Roman knight who was made a Christian saint because he pulled down a cruel proclamation against Christian working men posted up by the Empire of his day and tore it to shreds.

But why restore an old national flag when the Union Jack is regarded by the man in the street as the symbol of his country? Have not thousands of our men fought and died for it? Do not thousands of them regard it as sacred? But in the first place the flag of Saint George is still the traditional flag of English churches, and in the second, Englishmen have been grossly misled as to the history of the colours under which they have fought. Many English soldiers, directly they become acquainted with that history, long to see the old flag of the nation substituted for the new flag of the Empire, and the recent riot at the Central Hall, Westminster, on the occasion of Lord Derby's meeting, when the Union Jack was pulled down by ex-service men, does not suggest any particular affection for that flag on the part of our disillusioned soldiers.

That first splendid rush to the colours in the early days of the war was not inspired by Imperialism, but by Patriotism. In fact, the appeal was made for recruits to enlist against a brutal Imperialism which threatened the liberties of Europe. Who believes that those first volunteers were inspired with a passion to destroy nationality, or even to safeguard a dominion of the British Empire over subject peoples of the most various creeds and colours? What does the soldier care about the

furthest boundaries of the British Empire? What he cares for is England, its green fields and country lanes, the flare and laughter of its cities, his own home, even with its dwindling rights and liberties; and, would that we could have added, his own piece of land and his tools, but these have long ago been stolen from him.

It was assuredly not for Empire but for Country that our people fought. They loved the Union Jack, and were willing to die for it, because they were deceived into believing that it was the symbol of their country by Prussian-minded Imperialists, who were anxious that they should forget the flag of old England; for financiers, politicians, and newspaper-proprietors grow fat upon Empire while they build an England fit for heroes to starve in.

The Union Jack is not the old flag of this country. It is the modern flag of brute-force dominion. In its present form it was constructed to celebrate the triumph of a swollen, greedy Empire. The motto of old England and the true loyalists is "Right is Might." The motto of the ex-Kaiser, the Prussian Empire, the British Empire, and all empires founded upon swank and grab, is "Might is Right." Noble deeds have been done under the shade of the Union Jack; evil deeds also. But the noble deeds have been done by our fellow-countrymen for an ideal for which they believed the Union Flag stood, and which they are now beginning to discover that in its origin it denied. For consider its origin.

The present Union flag was made for the first time in the year 1801 to glorify the forcible union of Ireland with England.

It is in reality the flag of Saint George, with an addition in 1606 of the cross of Saint Andrew, representing the union of England and Scotland—a forcible union bitterly resented at the time by the Scottish people. A further addition was made in 1801, not, as is often supposed, of a cross of Saint Patrick, but of the Arms of the Fitzgerald family. For hundreds of years England had held Ireland by force, and in spite of short periods of seeming acquiescence Ireland has never accepted the fact of her conquest.

Before Cromwell, under English sovereigns, Ireland had been sufficiently badly treated, but her Parliament, even though it represented the more foreign and propertied elements, had sometimes had the courage to resist English demands, while our Kings, on their side, "wanted a good revenue and a numerous army, and therefore wanted to see the island prosperous and well-peopled and trade abundant." [1] But the coming of Cromwell meant the unspeakable degradation of Ireland: its people became subject to England without the protection of English citizenship, its Parliament was made dependent upon ours, savage penal laws were passed against the Irish, and commercial laws for the destruction of their industry. These evil conditions continued until the American War of Independence

[1] *The Government of Ireland*, Mrs. J. R. Green, p. 2; Labour Publishing Company, Ltd., 1921.

encouraged the Irish to wring from England a modicum of freedom.

The revival of the Irish Parliament—in spite of its being a close assembly of landed gentry and their like—brought a certain measure of prosperity to the country. This was suddenly cut short by the Act of Union of 1800, which the Union Jack, in its present form, was constructed to symbolise.

If this Act of Union was righteous, the Union Jack may be a Christian flag.

If this Act of Union was unrighteous, the Union Jack must be an unchristian flag.

Whatever affections and sentiments may have gathered round it since—and with these we sympathise—this conclusion is inevitable.

What, then, is the evidence from statesmen and historians as to the nature of this Act of Union?

Gladstone speaks of is as a "case which, on the part of England or of those in authority, combined violence and fraud, baseness, tyranny and cruelty, in a degree rarely if ever paralleled in history." [1]

Mr. G. P. Gooch writes: "If ever a statute has lacked moral validity it is the Act of Union of 1800. The Irish people were sold over the counter, and the methods by which a majority was secured form, perhaps, the most disgraceful chapter in the modern history of Great Britain." [2]

Mrs. J. R. Green writes that in Ireland a union was detested as a conspiracy against its liberties.

[1] *Aspects of the Irish Question*, p. 303.

[2] *Home Rule Problems*, p. 13; published by P. S. King, 1911.

The Act of Union was "formed in the British Cabinet, unsolicited by the Irish nation, passed in the middle of war, in the centre of a tremendous military force, under the influence of immediate personal danger." [1]

Lecky, himself a supporter of the British Empire and of the English and Irish propertied classes, writes as follows: "The measure was an English one, introduced prematurely, before it had been demanded by any section of Irish opinion, carried without dissolution, by gross corruption, in opposition to the majority of the free constituencies and the great preponderance of the unbribed intellect of Ireland." [2]

It must then be admitted that the Act of 1800 was an unrighteous Act, and that the Union Jack constructed to commemorate it is therefore an unchristian flag.

If the Union Jack stood for a free and voluntary Commonwealth of English-speaking [3] groups or nations, it might have been considered a Christian flag. At present we are living under a British Empire, and not a British Commonwealth. The fact that the colonies are voluntarily united with the Mother-country would constitute a Commonwealth and not an Empire, for a Commonwealth implies voluntary union, while an Empire implies compulsory

[1] *Irish Nationality*, p. 220 ff.; Home University Library.

[2] *History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. v, p. 306; Longmans, 1909.

[3] It would, however, be no longer the Union Jack, but a flag of union made out of the emblems of the various groups—cf. the Stars and Stripes.

dominion. We are, in fact, an Empire, not by virtue of this voluntary union of the colonies with ourselves, but by the fact of forcible or fraudulent annexation of peoples involuntarily subjected to our dominion. Soldiers who fought for the freedom of nations and the honour of their own now find themselves to have fought under a false symbol, under an ensign that denies these very things, for the Union flag, conceived in tyranny, has only too often, since its inception, given its shelter to injustice and slavery.

Can we honestly say, as so many do, that " wherever the Union Jack flies there is liberty " ? Can this be maintained when the English Bishop of Zanzibar, who was obliged during the war to expose the tyrannies of the German Empire in a pamphlet called *The Black Slaves of Prussia*, has since been obliged to expose the tyrannies of the British Empire in a pamphlet called *The Black Serfs of Great Britain* ? Over these black serfs the Union Jack is now flying. For nearly a hundred years the Union Jack has flown over the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong. Child-slavery has been abolished in " heathen " China,[1] but still flourishes among the miserable

[1] Since these words were written, owing to acute misery caused by the famine, slave-buyers have flocked to the famine-districts, and many victims have been sold to them for a dollar or so apiece, but the conditions in the British Dominion are reported as even worse. " In Hong Kong, under the British Flag, it is stated that 50,000 out of a population of 450,000 have been sold into slavery." See Daily Press, February 3, 1922, quoting " Report on Child Slavery in Hong Kong, compiled by Lieut.-Commander Haslewood, R.N. (Anti-Slavery Society. 3d.)

Chinese in this "Christian" British Dominion. There young girls are sold into slavery and prostitution, and treated with abominable cruelty under the British flag, and with the connivance of the British Empire. The custom is shrouded under the unctuous name of "adoption," but the *Church Times*, the *Daily News*,[1] and other papers have shown that it is in reality a gross form of slavery.

Who would maintain that the British penetrated India for the souls of the Indians and not for the pockets of the English? Even so keen an Anglo-Indian as Flora Annie Steel asserts that our Empire in the East began with "the ultimate sixpence." She speaks of "those early years of steady encroachment for the sake of monetary gain, and of intrigue, bribery, extortion and overreaching." She records with shame the story of John Company's dealings with the natives, the unprovoked attacks, the unscrupulous diplomacy, and believes that our unrighteous dealing was largely responsible for the Indian Mutiny.[2] According to Macaulay, our actions in India were dominated "by an ungovernable impatience to be rich." Our government of that country was in the early days "oppressive as the most oppressive form of barbarian despotism." He reminds his readers that the home Government was ultimately responsible. The direct administration of India in our own times has been an immense improvement, but even the *Morning Post*[3] admits

[1] May 11, 1921.
[2] *India*, by Mortimer Menpes; text by Flora Annie Steel.
[3] August 27, 1921.

that the recent risings are too widespread to be the work of a few irresponsible agitators.

Mr. H. G. Wells, who, though a Socialist, is Imperialist in sympathy, considers that English misrule in India presents so serious a problem that he devotes a paragraph in his intensely condensed *Outline of History* to the Amritsar affair.

He speaks in high praise—and probably not exaggerated praise—of the Indian Civil Servant during the last century, but sums up our Indian administration as unimaginative and inflexible, unless, indeed, the Government of India Act of 1919 opens a better future. But he condemns the spasmodic military violence of the badly educated British officers in India. During the recent war, "and the feverish years of unsettlement that followed, things occurred in India, the massacre of an unarmed political gathering at Amritsar in which nearly two thousand people were killed or wounded, floggings and humiliating outrages, a sort of official's Terror, that produced a profound moral shock when at last the Hunter Commission of 1919 brought them before the home public. In liberal-minded Englishmen, who have been wont to regard their Empire as an incipient league of free peoples, this revelation of the barbaric quality in its administrators produced a very understandable dismay." [1]

[1] P. 539; Cassell, revised and corrected edition, one vol. The suffocation of 64 Indian prisoners of the British Empire in a railway van on November 19, 1921, now officially admitted, and the wholesale floggings of imprisoned Indian victims, as reported in the English Press, January 31, 1922,

We are often told that this or that people is unfit for self-government. The argument is brought forward in connection with Egypt, India, and even with Ireland; but is not "the white man's burden" the cry of Pharisee empires who conceive themselves commissioned by Jehovah to go about the world meddling with other people's affairs by conquest and dominion for their supposed good? Who seriously believes this Pecksniffian defence of annexation? There is no human force in this world entirely evil, and I do not for a moment maintain that the British and other Empires have not occasionally and incidentally given to remote natives a justice superior to that of their own princes, and in other ways acted as benevolent schoolmasters, but the evils of Empire are far more numerous than its virtues. However this may be, who believes that the Union Jack flies over Egypt in the primary interest of the Egyptian people rather than in that of the European bondholder? Have not the risings of the people been crushed by British military force lest the Egyptians should successfully refuse to be further exploited for the profit of cosmopolitan finance?

As regards Ireland, we have been told for years that she is more trouble than she is worth, that we hold her for purely benevolent reasons, that she has cost the English taxpayer almost fabulous sums; but the *Morning Post*, unfortunately forgetting

as also the riots in Calcutta in which 4,000 mill-workers are implicated, do not suggest a brighter outlook in our Indian Empire.

this useful line of argument, has recently let the cat out of the bag by giving us, as one of its main reasons for withholding freedom from that unhappy country, the argument that we cannot afford to let her go. The *Morning Post's* own figures are as follows: England takes from Ireland annually £41,000,000.[1]

Now let us examine the statement, "Wherever the Union Jack flies there is liberty," with regard to recent doings in Ireland. The Black and Tans and Auxiliaries have been fighting under the Union Jack. The *Church Times*[2] has ably summarised the evidence against them, not as brought by Sinn Feiners or their sympathisers, but by supporters of the Union.

"The Viceroy of Ireland, late a Conservative Whip, took occasion to speak, at his first coming to Belfast, of the 'crimes, horrible crimes,' which they had committed. The Prime Minister admits that there have been deplorable excesses. Lord Denbigh, a Tory of the Tories, has said: 'The private evidence from unimpeachable sources is becoming overwhelming as to the hideous consequences of turning loose in Ireland this force of British, who, under the provocation of continued cowardly murders, had in too many cases committed acts which can only be described as revolting. . . . As an Englishman, I feel convinced that if the

[1] The *Morning Post* admits that it has cost us £20,000,000 annually to dragoon Ireland, and will cost us still more if we pursue our pre-truce policy.

[2] August 19, 1921.

English people as a whole realise the hateful things done ostensibly in their name, sometimes officially, sometimes by irresponsible and uncontrolled individuals, a wave of indignation and sympathy with Ireland would spread over the country.' Lieut.-General Sir Henry Lawson is a very distinguished officer of those forces of the Crown which the *Morning Post* accuses us of calumniating. He says: 'The actual killings by the punitive bands have exceeded those by Sinn Fein, and every horror of circumstance in individual killings by Irish gunmen can be matched by murders on behalf of the Crown of greater cruelty and brutality.' We invite the attention of the *Morning Post* to this testimony from its own friends." [1]

The evidence of acts of tyranny committed under the Union Jack in many parts of the British Empire, not excepting England herself, where the workers and uninfluential people are gradually losing the last remnants of their ancient liberties, could be multiplied almost indefinitely, but in face of the facts already given it can hardly be maintained that "wherever the Union Jack flies there is liberty." [2]

[1] The *Church Times* presents a puzzle. If the religion described in this book be the religion of JESUS CHRIST, it is hardly too strong to charge some of its writers with apostasy, but it seems to have on its staff contributors of diametrically opposed religious convictions, and it must in fairness be admitted that some of its "leaders" and notes on Ireland, on Chinese slavery, on forced labour in East Africa, etc., are conceived in an exceptionally generous and Christian spirit.

[2] Some pietistic Christians have attempted to glorify the Union Jack by asserting its three crosses to be a symbol

Why should not the ancient flag of Saint George be substituted for this discredited ensign? Why should not the cry of "Saint George for merry England" drown the bombastic cry of Saint Jack for dismal Empire? Why should not the patriot's festival of Saint George[1] replace, as it does in Thaxted, the new-fangled festival of Empire?

of the Blessed Trinity. The blasphemous nature of this assertion will be obvious now that we have discovered its origin.

[1] April 23rd.

CHAPTER III

## THE IRISH TRICOLOUR AND THE RED FLAG.

THE orange, white, and green tricolour of Ireland hangs in Thaxted Church as a symbol of the right to freedom of Ireland [1] and of all oppressed nations. Sinn Fein does not mean bloodshed, but is simply Irish for "ourselves." The Sinn Fein flag is, then, the emblem of that principle of Self-determination for which we are supposed to have fought the war

The Bishops have bravely pointed to the horrible deeds done by certain men fighting under both the Union Jack and the Sinn Fein flag in Ireland. They do not suggest that the clergy should remove the Union Jack from their churches because of these horrible deeds. Why then, because of horrible deeds, admitted by English soldiers to be less numerous

[1] This chapter, which with the rest of the book, was written in Advent, 1921, before the Settlement, is left unaltered, as giving our reasons for displaying the Irish flag last summer, when the Irish were still fighting for that freedom which they have now in some measure won. I am informed from Irish official sources that this tricolour will be the flag of the Irish Free State. Into the dispute between the republicans and the present Irish Government it is not necessary to enter, as wherever one's own personal sympathies may lie, it is obviously a matter for the Irish Nation to decide.

than those of the Crown, should they order that the Irish flag be removed ?

The Sinn Fein flag does not stand for any particular method of achieving Self-determination, but for that Self-determination itself. Many who range themselves under its colours deplore the excesses of certain extremists. A considerable number do not believe in armed force at all : of this number was Skeffington, who had never borne arms in his life and disapproved of force. There were even some Sinn Feiners, in the early days of the movement, who believed that an Irish Parliament and the crowning of King George in Dublin would have been a satisfactory settlement Of course, the vast majority do believe in that same method of self-defence which Belgians and Poles have employed against great Empires, and which England has recently honoured by erecting a statue to George Washington, who employed it so successfully against ourselves.

The Sinn Fein flag does not, however, stand for a method but a principle—the principle of Self-determination for a united Ireland. Its composition is orange, white, and green : the white standing for a peaceful union between the orange of Ulster and the green of the rest.

The employing classes of Belfast, propertied and Protestant, are the descendants of foreign colonists thrust upon the Irish nation to keep them in subjection to England. The fact that they have been to some extent absorbed into Irish life and are proud to call themselves Irishmen is a tribute to the power of assimilation which historians always cite as the

supreme test of a people's possessing nationality. This power has been most marked throughout Irish history. The history of Ulster does not suggest any particular love of England, and Belfast's desire to remain within the Empire is motived by quite other considerations than those of affection. The Orange preparations for armed rebellion against England in 1914 do not exactly suggest loyalty to this country, but are typically Irish, and the rest of Ireland soon followed the Orange lead, though somewhat to the amazement and disgust of Belfast.

The "Government of Ireland Act" of 1920, though ultimately accepted by the Ulster group, was framed in England without consultation with any group, not excepting the Unionists, in Ireland, though probably by secret arrangement with the Belfast employers. It was a disruptive measure, and its divisions were purely arbitrary. The historic Ulster, consisting of nine counties, would have cut down the Orange majority almost to vanishing point or possibly have obliterated it. This amazing fact is generally suppressed in English newspapers, for it goes to prove how fundamentally united the Irish are in their aspirations. Obviously, then, the true Ulster refuses partition from the rest of the country. Now, if our Government had honestly wished to safeguard the interests of the Protestant minority, and rightly or wrongly to bestow independence upon them, their Disruption of Ireland Bill would have excluded the five Ulster counties where Catholics are in a majority, and included four counties only, with Belfast as their centre.

But there is one thing that Orange employers fear more than the Catholic religion, and that is the possible awakening of their own serfs. The result of this obvious division would have been a Labour majority in a very few years. To avoid this danger two agricultural counties, which possess a Catholic majority but are reactionary against the labourers' claim, were forcibly torn from Catholic Ireland and added to this new political freak—"Ulster." Could the disruptive principle go further?—for this is not only a disruption of Ireland but a disruption of Ulster.

Sinn Fein, therefore, stands for a united Ireland, with such measure of local self-government as is consistent with that unity.

The Irish tricolour is the flag of a devout Christian country and of a Christian movement. The fact that certain "Catholics" in England, Roman and Anglican, oppose, while many Nonconformists support it, is not surprising, when we remember how often nowadays the defence of essential Catholic principles is left to English Nonconformists, while many English Papists and Anglicans ally themselves with the virulent Protestant mobs of Belfast.

The Irish tricolour in Thaxted Church stands, then, for the freedom of a united Ireland—such freedom as her people would accept. The principle of Self-determination is not fulfilled by another country dictating "generous terms" which you ought to accept, but by determining for yourselves what you will accept. The choice may be complete

separation or a compromise, but it must be choice, not compulsion.

The Red Flag, in spite of its colour, does not spell bloodshed. People point to the blood-red of this flag and maintain that its followers wish to bludgeon everyone into agreement with them. Our own experience in Thaxted is that the bludgeoning has been on the other side!

Many who bring this objection sing,

> The Son of God goes forth to war,
> A kingly crown to gain;
> His blood-red banner streams afar . . .

Do they seriously think that the blood-red of *this* banner necessarily commits them to bludgeoning and bloodshed if they "follow in His train"?

Every flag ever used in battle incidentally involves bloodshed, but unless people are prepared to give up their Union Jack, their Stars and Stripes or their French tricolour for this reason they have no right to bring this particular objection against the Red Flag.

But have there not been atrocities committed under the Red Flag? Do the objectors mean the many atrocities invented by the Capitalist Press, or the very few that may be substantiated?—for these are less numerous than the well-substantiated atrocities committed by the counter-revolutionary forces or by the English Government in Ireland.

I have heard Roman Catholics condemning the Red Flag because of the atrocities of its supporters, and yet, if we are to remove the Red Flag from our

church, why not the crucifix? For we seem to remember that symbol as associated with the atrocities of the Spanish Inquisition. Nevertheless, the crucifix stands for a principle, not a method: so also the "blood-red banner" of the revolutionaries.

Let us consider its origin. The people of Paris in 1848 demanded the Red Flag as their ensign. Lamartine objected. He stated that the Tricolour had travelled round the world, while the Red Flag had only travelled round the Champ-de-Mars, trailed in the blood of the people. He pointed to its first use, by the Mayor of Paris in 1789, as a signal for bloodshed. Now, if the use of the Red Flag on our railways to stop an accident and thereby prevent bloodshed can be described as a signal for bloodshed, then and then only is it fair so to describe the action of the Mayor of Paris. It is not true, as so often stated, that Lamartine succeeded with the people. They still clamoured for their emblem, and only accepted the tricolour on condition that the red emblem should be fastened to it, that the words "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" should be written across it, and that all public officials should wear a red rosette.

The Red Flag did not, however, originate with either the Revolution of 1848 or that of 1789, but was a medieval flag of Catholic France. "We find that the Red Flag, called Oriflamme, was from the reign of Henry I to the time of Charles VII the national standard."[1]

And just as the Red Flag is older than the

[1] Louis Blanc, *Historical Revelations*.

Revolution, so also are the doctrines on which the Revolution is based. For these doctrines the reader is referred to Rousseau's *Contrat Social*, a book which, "short as a gospel," is compared by Hilaire Belloc to "some exact and strong piece of engineering."[1] The gist of this work is to be found in the American Declaration of Independence:

"That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of those ends it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to reinstate a new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organising its powers in such a form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness."

These, then, are the principles of the Red Flag as summed up in modern thought. Should you prefer them in their ancient Catholic form, you will find them summarised by a writer in *The (Roman) Catholic Encyclopedia*.[2] He is forced to admit, against the modern practice of his own Church—which equally with Protestant churches has departed from catholic doctrine—that formerly great theologians of the Church "permitted rebellion against oppressive rulers when the tyranny had become extreme and when no other means of safety were

[1] Belloc, *French Revolution*; Home University Library.
[2] P. 109, vol. xv (Catenian edition).

available. This merely carried to its logical conclusion the doctrine of the Middle Ages that the supreme ruling authority comes from God through the people for the public good."

The canon law, although for a while it tolerated slavery, incorporates in its pages as the ideal to be aimed at the statement of Gregory the Great in which he describes the purpose of the Incarnation as being to break the chain of slavery by which men are bound and to restore them to their primitive liberty.[1] In accordance with this ideal, slavery was practically non-existent in England in the eleventh century, and its successor, serfdom, soon began to be as surely undermined. The fact that the wage slavery of to-day is not seriously attacked by the Church is a proof of the measure of her apostasy.

But freedom is not, according to the medieval Churches, enough. To freedom must be added association, so men gradually learned to enter into agreement with one another ; and at this point, says Maitland, in his introduction to Gierke, the medieval writers begin to develop the theory of the Social Contract, which is wrongly thought to have originated with Rousseau, for all society should according to them be " a Social Contract or contract of partnership." [2]

From this contract flows the catholic principle of government by the consent of the governed.

[1] A. J. Carlyle, *Medieval Political Theory in the West*, chap. v, vol. 2 ; Blackwood.

[2] Maitland's *Gierke : Political Theories of the Middle Ages*, Cambridge University Press. 1913.

For the function of making laws is rightly "reserved for the Community, since all the obligatory force of laws proceeds from the express or silent consensus of those who are to be bound. Therefore the Ruler also is bound by the laws, and in case he transgresses the limits of his power, he may be judged and deposed by the People. And all this is imprescriptible and inalienable Right bestowed by the law of God and Nature." [1]

The duty of non-resistance to bad rulers and the divine right of kings were very exceptional theories and did not become popular till the post-Reformation period. He sums up the medieval theory of kingship as being that the king is bound to administer and *himself to obey*; for, "the laws are not the result of the arbitrary dictates of one man, but arise out of the immemorial customs of the whole people: that these customs are based on the natural convictions of justice and fellowship, etc., that are to be found in the hearts of men, implanted there by God. If the king, or indeed any other ruler, is a tyrant and forgets justice, then he is a king only in name, but has forfeited his authority." He has cited as one of "the commonplaces of literature" of the time before the eleventh century the theory that the ruler only rules by the consent of the ruled and may be ignored if he forget justice.

A. J. Carlyle shows that this duty of rebellion was not merely an abstract theory, but cites numerous instances of its being put into practice;

[1] Carlyle, ibid., p. 49; Cambridge University Press, 1913.

e.g. the Saxon Revolt of 1073. The revolutionists of that period maintained against Henry IV that they were not bound by their oath, which was only conditional on the ruler behaving as a true king and "administering justice and mercy." "If he violated these things they would not hold themselves bound by their oath, but would wage a just war against him as a barbarian enemy and an oppressor of the Christian name, and would fight with their last breath for the Church of God, for the Christian Faith, and for their own liberty."

John of Salisbury, although giving due weight to the theory that an evil ruler may be God's scourge upon the wicked, and that therefore it is sometimes doubtful whether he ought to be resisted, yet maintains very emphatically that the tyrant has no rights against the people and may justly and rightfully be slain. He who does not attack such an enemy of human society "is guilty of a crime against himself and the whole body of the Commonwealth."

This illustrious English theologian "sums up, no doubt in somewhat extreme and harsh terms, the normal doctrine of these centuries, that there can be no legitimate government which does not represent the principle of justice, that this justice is embodied in the law: the ruler who is unjust, and who violates the laws and customs of his country, has ceased to have any claim to the obedience of his subjects, and may justly be resisted, and if necessary deposed and killed. Although the form of his principle of the right of resistance

to unjust and illegal authority is probably literary in its origin, and might not have met with general approbation, yet the essential Principle which he maintains is the normal view of the Middle Ages." [1]

Thus it will be seen that the Christian conception of government throughout the Middle Ages is not absolutist or monarchic in the modern sense, but republican. The ideal "king" of the Christian thinkers was more like a President of a French or rather an American Republic than a modern Emperor. The ideal of the Christian Church is, then, precisely that government by the consent of the governed which is the basis of the French and American Republics—that government which Lloyd George honours with his lips and denies by his actions, insisting that the Irish shall remain within the Empire, with or without their consent, backing his insistence with threats of extreme violence, with the approval of the whole Capitalist Press.

The Red Flag is therefore in its origin the old flag of a Christian Nation, and the ideas that it symbolised and still symbolises are ancient principles of the Christian Church.

As to the alleged horrors—and it will be remembered that atrocities occur in every great crisis of the world's history—Charles Kingsley in his *Ancien Régime* [2] comes to the conclusion that the horrors

[1] The above quotations are from A. J. Carlyle, *Medieval Political Theory*, chap. v, vol. 3; Blackwood & Sons. Cf. chap. vi, which is devoted to a more detailed study of the medieval doctrine of the Social Contract. [2] Macmillan, 1867.

of the aristocratic tyranny which preceded the Revolution are in reality responsible, and he continues: "To those who believe that the world is governed by a living God, it may seem strange at first sight that this moral anarchy was allowed to endure: that the avenging and yet most purifying storm of the French Revolution, inevitable from Louis XIV's latter years, was not allowed to burst two generations sooner than it did." Further, he suggests that the worst massacres which took place before the Republic military government had controlled the violence of the people were occasioned by the memory of the innumerable wrongs wrought on women, the thousands of young girls prostituted by the nobles, and the monstrous contempt for the starving poor demonstrated by the reply of Foulon to a demand for bread—"Let them eat grass." Macaulay also states that while he does not wish to palliate its crimes and excesses, he still believes that the Revolution will fertilise the soil which it has devastated. He contends that it gives us good hope for the destinies of the human race, and records that "already, in those parts which have suffered most severely, rich cultivation and secure dwellings have begun to appear among the waste." [1]

The verdict of these two writers, whose historical judgment has been questioned on other points, has been fully confirmed by modern scientific historians, such as Lord Acton. So much so that Mr. Gilbert Chesterton can write: "It is not neces-

[1] *Critical and Historical Essays*, 1851.

sary nowadays to defend the French Revolution. . . . The French Revolution was attacked because it was democratic and defended because it was democratic." [1]

It has sometimes been objected that the Red Flag has changed its meaning, and that from being the flag of nationality and the rights of man within the nation it has become the flag of the International. But Frederick Denison Maurice writes of the French Revolution: "It began with a declaration of individual rights, but upon that declaration it professed to build a society; this society was to be *universal.* It is true that the character of the revolutionary proceedings, from first to last, was eminently French. . . . But . . . even the Constitutions which were propounded one after another for France itself had no more reference to France than to Kamschatka; they were all constructed upon universal principles, all meant for mankind." [2]

While some condemn the Red Flag because it reminds them of the French Revolution, others condemn it because it spells Bolshevism. "Bolshevism" is the present Bogy Man of the newspapers. The people who use the term have no conception of its meaning, but trust their favourite paper, with its lurid tales of atrocities, its manufactured news, its suppression of the horrors on the other side, its lies about free-love. They do not know that their favourite newspaper is owned

[1] *The Crimes of England*, chap. iii; Palmer and Hayward, 1915.

[2] *The Kingdom of Christ*, p. 275; Rivingtons, 1842.

by a gang of financiers "interested" in the oil-fields and other industrial undertakings in Russia. They do not know that "loot" is the object of the anti-Bolshevist campaign. The latest tale is that the famine is due to Bolshevist misrule. To what then was the famine in Czarist Russia of 1891 due? and why is the present famine at its worst precisely where "the Whites" have ruled?[1]

We hold no brief for or against the Bolshevists. The news from Russia is too confusing to form any very clear notion of what is really going on there. But with the help of the Bolshevists the workers have secured the land, of which during the Czar's reign they were only in possession of a small portion. The houses of the rich, standing three-quarters empty, are now shared by the poor. Education has been fostered, prostitution practically abolished. The principal charge against the Russian Government seems to be that it has followed Christ by putting down the mighty from their seat and exalting them of low estate: it can hardly be denied that it has been fairly successful in fulfilling our Lady's programme of sending the rich empty away. The plutocrats have wept and howled,

[1] It is said that the famine is largely due to the peasants being discouraged from producing the maximum crop by Bolshevist requisitioning of supplies; but surely supplies would have equally been requisitioned by *any* government, Capitalist or Communist, in time of war; and if the peasant "grouses" at helping his country, and only produces sufficient for himself in time of need, so much the worse for the reactionaries in Church and State under whom he grew up and under whose influence this unimaginative avaricious spirit was fostered.

as Saint James in Holy Scripture said they would have to, for the miseries that have come upon them. Lenin has adopted the Scripture motto to the effect that if any wills not to work neither shall he eat, as the practical basis of his Republic, and has attempted to found a Communist State in which the rule shall be "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need." Communism is not the only theory deducible from the Christian religion, but in any case it is more compatible than Capitalism with that religion. Whether Lenin succeeds or fails, there are at least considerable elements in the Bolshevist programme which remind us of the Christian programme. As to bloodshed, we must remember that the Bolshevist authorities have been moderating influences upon the fiercer elements, which have sometimes proved to be beyond control. In any case the atrocities of the "Whites," of Deniken, of Wrangel, of Kolchak, are so monstrous that the Bolshevist record pales into insignificance. Much can be said against Bolshevist methods of industry and against many of their doings, but if we compare their record, for instance, not as given in the English Press, but by responsible writers on Russia, with the record of the late Czar, who slaughtered 26,000 people in one year and under whose rule the people groaned in abject misery, there is little doubt that the Bolshevist administrators would appear at God's judgment seat with the cleaner record of the two.

It would probably be necessary to oppose much that has been done by the Bolshevists in Russia,

but even if the Red Flag represented Russian rule alone, which it does not, it would be a closer emblem of the Christ, Who was determined to make a world in which the last should be first and the first last, than are the Imperial ensigns of acquisitive States.

But we have seen that the Red Flag was honoured and upheld before Bolshevism was dreamt of and is independent of that system. Swinburne and other great English poets who supported the Red Flag could hardly have been singing the praise of a system of which they had never heard. William Morris, who loved it, would probably have opposed the centralisation and dictatorship of a few which, rightly or wrongly, mark the beginnings of Bolshevist rule.

We have traced the history of the Red Flag down through the 1848 experiment in Paris to the Revolution of 1789, and back beyond 1789 to its origin in Christian France of the Middle Ages. It has been shown, therefore, that the flags in Thaxted Church—the flag of Saint George, the flag of the Irish Nation, the flag of the International—are all Christian flags, and it has been urged that all three stand for certain definite Christian ideas. But so little are these ideas understood, so seldom are they acknowledged to be Christian by the professed followers of Christ, that it will be necessary to devote the next few chapters to an exposition of certain root principles of the Christian religion which have become obscured or even in some cases deliberately denied by the religious world of to-day.

CHAPTER IV

# THE BLOOD-RED BANNER AND THE WORLD TO COME.

WHAT are these root principles of the Christian Faith? Let us go to the Gospels, for they are the first records of the Christian Community. But to do this effectively we must not remain blind to the results of recent New Testament Criticism. I do not mean for a moment that it is the business of all Christians to acquaint themselves with every wild theory of any New Testament critic, but there are certain conclusions which are practically unanimous and which must be taken into account by careful readers of the Gospels, and among these there is one that amounts to certainty. This conclusion is of the utmost importance, and Christians will be the more willing to accept it in that the most modern critics in advancing it are in agreement with the most conservative students of old and with the unanimous conviction of the Early Church. It is the conviction that our Lord preached the destruction of the world,[1] or more properly

[1] "This age" and "the age to come" are admitted by all students of the New Testament to be a more accurate translation of our Lord's words than "this world" and "the world to come."

the Age in which He lived ; and the impending substitution upon this earth of another " world " or Renovated Order of Things, a Divine Commonwealth or " Age to Come." [1]

It was an Age in which the Father's will should throughout the wide world be done on earth as it is in heaven. In the Coming Age the conditions of Paradise will be restored. The people of that Age will be as the Angels. It is likened to a joyous banquet. The Lord's Own Service, that weekly Eucharist of the Early Church, is a feast in *anticipation of that happy renovation of the earth.* It is an Age of light and peace and justice, extending its blessings to all nations. and *all people will pour into it the riches of their own particular characteristics.* To the Jews before Christ it was national, or at best a benevolent Imperialism with tributary

[1] Batiffol's ingenuity has not been able to explain away the innumerable passages which point to this conclusion, and Harnack's theory of " God and the soul " has been ground to powder by Loisy. For a summary of the arguments by which we are inevitably led to the conclusion that Christ teaches an Apocalyptic Kingdom, cf. Tyrrell's *Christianity at the Cross Roads.* The author could make nothing of the conclusion he reached, but was too honest not to record it fully. Two other books should also be studied: (1) Schweitzer's *The Quest of the Historical Jesus,* translation published by Adam & Charles Black, 1910—a review of New Testament criticism. Many of Schweitzer's own positions are untenable, but his evidence as to the belief of our Lord in the Coming Age is conclusive. Cf. (2) Sanday's *The Life of Christ in Recent Research,* Clarendon Press, 1907, and Schweitzer's *Quest of the Historical Jesus,* translation published by Adam & Charles Black, 1910. Cf. (3) Emmet's *The Eschatological Question in the Gospels* (T. & T. Clark, 1911)—a most important criticism and summary of results.

nations in tutelage. But to Christ it was international, the Redeemed Nations interlinked as the wide family of the Good Father. Above all, the blessedness of the New Age will consist in abundance of life, which had always appealed to the Hebrew mind as the highest good. "The idea of life, as we find it in the Old Testament, includes in itself not only length of days, but joy, prosperity, peace, righteousness—everything that makes up the full activity of man's nature." [1]

The Christians at Jerusalem, in gladness of heart and of their *own free will* sharing their goods, the meals in common in various parts of the Church the tendency towards equality among the faithful, scoffed at by Pagan writers—all these are signposts to the nature of the Kingdom as the Early Church conceived it. Some may say: "Was not this attempt at a common life in the Church identical with the Kingdom itself? Had not the New Age come in the life of the early Christians?" The early Christians would have answered: "If the New Age be already come, then are we of all men the most miserable." No one who has studied the New Testament for five minutes could believe such a thing. In their sharings and their kindliness, in mutual bonds of love and friendship, they were *gaining fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, experiencing some foretaste of that golden time, but with persecutions*; [2] with persecutions so terrible as

[1] Scott, *The Kingdom of the Messiah* (1911)—a most important book, which all should study carefully.

[2] Mark x. 30.

to be unendurable if they had not been sustained by the belief in that world to come in which they had been promised overmastering life. Every Eucharistic celebration of those days was in trembling excitement and joyous anticipation of the "Good time coming." Our Nicene Creed ends with, "We believe . . . in the life of the world to come." In some of the earliest liturgies the service actually concludes with the words "The Lord is coming."

No; the *Church* was the *organ of that Coming Age*, the *nucleus of the universal Kingdom wherein dwelleth righteousness*, the *midwife of a new world in the pangs of birth*. None of these symbols express the whole truth, but if the Church be altogether identified with the international world of justice, the truth it was striving to express is altogether lost.

But the Golden Age never came, never has come. Was Our Lord mistaken? Was He just another of those dreamers whose hopes have failed and whose mouths are choked with dust?

We must not delude ourselves. *The Preparation for Christ's Kingdom* meant the conversion of the hearts of mankind from injustice and greed, impurity and cowardice, to justice, generosity, purity, courage, and *the Kingdom itself* meant either (*a*) the natural expression of this common conversion in a New Order of things where all should serve each other in joy and life and peace, or (*b*) the coming down in some more sudden and miraculous way of just the same order of things in answer to this same preparation.

Either the coming on the clouds with the angels of heaven and the marvellous portents is the language of poetry or the language of fact, *but there is absolutely no doubt whatsoever* that the Kingdom was to be realised here, and was to be enjoyed by those of mankind who had prepared themselves in the above manner for it, and that its coming would grind the unprepared to powder.

That is what Christ believed, that is what He taught. That is what the Church believed, that is what it taught.[1]

The Kingdom has not come. If we are honest with ourselves, we must ask, Was Christ a failure?

Immediately, I imagine, there will leap to our memories the saying, "Let God be true, but every man a liar."[2] Is there not one way of escape

[1] You must remember that Christ said very little about the future life, and that this presents a huge difficulty to the "Bible only" folk, though it need not present much difficulty to Christians in general, for they believe that He left His Spirit with the Church to guide its members to a right development of the faith. Frankly, the position is this: most of the passages of the N.T. which the nineteenth century referred to a life beyond the grave undoubtedly refer to the coming of the Kingdom here. If you reject the authority of the Church, that is, the developing collective convictions of Christendom, you have frankly not enough to go upon in the bare text of Scripture as regards a life beyond the grave. If you hold the catholic position in any degree, there is enough in germ in the N.T. to give you what you need in this particular; but in neither case is it honest, and indeed in any way possible, to hold that Christ Himself laid *the stress* on the life after the grave. He laid the stress undoubtedly on what our Evangelical friends call the Milleenium, i.e. the Golden Age to be established here.

[2] Romans iii. 4.

from the dilemma, and one only? Can we not divert the question from Christ to ourselves? Is there not a tremendous alternative—an alternative full of humiliation for ourselves and yet full of hope?

The question is not, was Christ a failure, but are we, the followers of Christ, not failures? Has God not in His long-suffering mercy delayed [1] the coming of His Kingdom, that Kingdom so full of blessedness for the blessed, but so full of horror and destruction for the accursed apostates who mouth "Lord, Lord!" and neither love nor do the things He commands?

People talk about the kenosis, of the things that Christ might have known and might not have known. Whatever be the value of this line of thought, it is more than possible that during the human term of Christ's life, even knowing man as profoundly as He did, He might not know the exact point at which the collective will of mankind would be prepared for the Advent, and in His wonderful belief in the family of mankind He might sometimes have seen the Kingdom coming even before His Apostles had traversed the villages of Palestine; and at other moments, when the dark realities, the perversions and cowardice of men, were thick upon His soul, He may well have said precisely what the Gospel records that He did say: "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man . . . neither the Son." [2]

He may have been mistaken in the matter of

[1] 2 Peter iii. [2] Mark xiii. 32.

days or months or years, or rather the unfolding of the eternal plan may have been delayed in God's great clemency, but He was never mistaken in the matter of the eternal plan itself, which must surely be fulfilled in God's good time.

And there is a tremendous difference between Our Lord and most of the Pharisees of His day, beyond the obvious contrast of His genuineness and their hypocrisy, and the keynote to that difference is to be found in a passage which is often misquoted and more often misunderstood. In answer to those particular enemies of His whom He called vipers,[1] plunderers,[2] and whited sepulchres,[3] who were asking Him when God's Kingdom should come, He said that the Kingdom of God was among them, or rather upon them, knocking insistently at their very doors.[4] But immediately before this, as prelude, He says, "God's Kingdom cometh not with observation." This is the keynote saying so often misunderstood. By translating "the Kingdom of God is *within* you" instead of "among you," or "upon you," or "in the midst of you" (as R.V. margin), people have got an odd sort of notion that "not with observation" is equivalent to secretly and internally, as opposed to outwardly and obviously and with alarming manifestation. But they should have been warned of this mistake by what follows: "For as the lightning shoots and gleams from one side of the sky to the other, so shall the Son of Man be."[5] And unfortunately

[1] Matthew xxiii. 33. [2] Ibid. 25. [3] Ibid. 27.
[4] Luke xvii. 21. [5] Luke xvii. 24 (Moffatt's translation).

Christ's saying about the Kingdom coming as a thief in the night to modern ears seems to support the "secretly" interpretation. To us the thief's action suggests both secret stealth and sudden unexpectedness, but to Jesus and His hearers, living in an age of turbulence and the armed bandit, a robber [1] breaking through in the night suggests not stealth but suddenness, and His own emphasis is always upon the unexpected hour in which the bandit arrives. Immediately people become better acquainted with the ideas of the Pharisees He was opposing,[2] the whole incident becomes extraordinarily significant, for these Pharisees were practically Determinists. Unlike the Sadducees, they did believe in a Divine Kingdom to come, however formalist their idea of it and however faint their desire for it; but unlike the Nationalist party (the Zealots) and the Internationalist party (anticipated by Christ), they did not believe that one could hasten its coming by a conversion of the human will or by any human activities. "The duty of a true Israelite was whole-hearted devotion to the Torah, joined to patient waiting on the Divine will." [3]

Now, Christ here definitely dissociates Himself from this patient "lying in wait," this passive watching, for the word translated somewhat lamely

[1] Kleptes = thief, robber.

[2] E.g., Keim's *Jesus of Nazareth*, a large section devoted to Pharisees, or cf. any modern Dictionary of the Bible, such as Hastings's.

[3] Hastings, 1 vol. *D.B.*, p. 719.

by "observation" means "lying in wait." And this throws light on an otherwise difficult passage about the Kingdom of Heaven being taken by violence.[1] Christ had just said that John the Baptist was not only a prophet, but more than a prophet, that is, that he not only prophesied but "helped to produce or create the events which fulfilled the prophecies."[2]

John had helped to produce the movement which had brought the Kingdom almost to its birth, and in Christ's teaching, which the common people heard gladly, the Kingdom is thundering at their very doors "with revolutionary force and energy."[3] All this is distasteful to cold-hearted, worldly-minded devourers of widows' houses, whom Christ sarcastically calls the wise and prudent, for the stormers are publicans and sinners and harlots, "the moral scum and refuse of society."[4] Not only were these outsiders, the scavenging dogs, as the Pharisees called them, daring to associate themselves with the propaganda of the Kingdom, but they were actually presuming to believe that by their volcanic zeal and violence they could "*drag it towards them*,"[5] and Christ heads them and inspires them and urges them on, in direct antagonism to the fatalistic rigorists, who sneer at the vulgarity and enthusiasm of this ridiculous movement.

Once it becomes clear that the coming of the

[1] Matthew xi. 12.

[2] *Expositor*, 1877, vol. 5, pp. 197 ff. (A. B. Bruce, and cf. Schweitzer). [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid. [5] Scott, *Kingdom*, ibid.

Kingdom can be delayed or hastened by the action of men, the apparent uncertainty, or change of mind in Christ, about the exact date of the Advent, though never about the Advent itself, becomes intelligible, and in spite of all His hopefulness He often sees a considerable period of tumult and darkness and faithlessness before the ingathering of the nations [1] shall be fulfilled, although He may not during His earthly term have anticipated in its depth and height the whole perfidy of man. It is not once that His disciples forsook Him and fled. We have forsaken Him in that we have forsaken the very idea of that Golden Age which He died that He might usher in. We have crucified Him afresh, so that even now He cries, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

The world will say our Christ has failed—His dream of the Commonwealth of Justice among mankind is nothing but an empty dream; and the world will be right, for it has our own Scriptures as well as the facts of life on its side.

But a great revival can save the Faith and save the honour of the Saviour. Come ye out from the Pharisees and be ye separate; abandon altogether their infidel Determinism, their passive lying-in-wait, their watchings without work. Christians, ally yourselves with Christ, ally yourselves with the vulgar herd of His followers, with their volcanic energies, with their deathless hopes, their unconquerable zeal; ally yourselves with those who have not shouted "Lord, Lord!" but yet are doing

[1] "The times of the Gentiles."

His will. Come in to the great International movement for the Redemption of the world and range yourselves under its red symbol.

His blood-red banner streams afar,
Who follows in His train ?

Canon Kennett, Regius Professor of Hebrew, Cambridge, in *The Interpreter*, October 1913, protests against the extreme "eschatologists," and suggests that they mistake the language of imagery for concrete fact. When the skies are described as brass, the description is obviously poetic. So, with much of the apocalyptic literature, and especially with our Lord, who, according to Kennett, is not so much influenced by this literature as by the older and more orthodox books of the Old Testament. He doubts whether our Lord literally meant that after the crash He would appear on actual clouds, etc. Like F. D. Maurice, he sees in political crises a coming of the Lord in judgment. But whether he or the more thoroughgoing eschatologists are right, both he and they place the New World here upon this earth.

CHAPTER V

## MAN OR MANGOLD-WURZEL: THE WORLD THAT NEVER CAME.

We have said that the coming of this Divine Commonwealth may be delayed or hastened by the action of men; but what constitutes a man?

The world as God began to make it was very good, but in order to make it better God began to create beings in His own likeness.

These beings are loosely called men and women, but they do not really become men and women until they have grown into the likeness of God.

If, then, we want to know what men and women are really like, that is, what God intends them to be like, or, in other words, what human nature really is, we must ask what God is like, as they are created in His likeness.

What, then, is God?

God is Fellowship and God is Freedom.

God is Fellowship—we often talk of God as being love and justice and tenderness, but this is not really possible unless there is somebody to love, someone with whom to be just, and someone with whom to be tender; for we all know that to be tender with oneself is no true kindness, that self-justice is that ugly thing self-righteousness, and that self-love

is sin. This is why we accept as reasonable the revelation that God is Fellowship, or, in theological language, a Trinity, and believe that from everlasting God was no proud and isolated self-lover, but a community of persons bound together by mutual love, justice and mercy in one Being.

God is Freedom—and, further, God is all this because He likes to be all this; in fact, love means freedom, for love cannot be compelled.

Now, if this is what God is like, and men and women are created in the likeness of God, they only become men and women in freedom and in fellowship—that is, in a freely chosen fellowship. They cannot be men and women [1] unless they have free choice; they cannot be men and women until they choose fellowship.

A human being, therefore, means one who by his own free choice lives in good fellowship; and when we say that it was God's purpose to create creatures who by their own free choice would live in good fellowship, we are really saying that God purposed to make men and women.

God could have compelled us not to sin, though I doubt whether He could have compelled us to be good, for to be good is very much more than not to sin, and goodness really involves freedom; but whether this is so or not, if God had compelled us

[1] This argument applies equally to Nations and the International. Nations must have free choice and must find themselves in learning to use their choice for International fellowship. The argument is worked out in the next chapter and the last.

not to sin He would have failed to create men and women, for men and women, as we have seen, are free beings and not driven slaves.

When people say God could have prevented the late war, they must either mean God could have compelled men not to hate each other, nor misunderstand each other, nor grasp at what they think are their own interests, regardless of the lives of others, or they must mean He could have allowed all these passions in man and yet have so framed the world that these passions would have had no disastrous consequences. Obviously, if He had done the former He would, as we have shown, have failed to make men and women—preferring vegetables without choice to adventurous humans with choice, or drilled hordes of manacled slaves to daring and heroic freedmen—and obviously, if He had done the latter He would have failed to create men and women and would have created devils.

And you have only to think steadily for a moment or so to see how ghastly would be the state of a world in which men and women were allowed the free play of all their passions without "facing the music." Think of a world in which the internal corruption of drunkenness and immorality remained undiscovered and ran riot, because drunkenness and immorality never led to paralysis, or an unhealthy skin, or loss of physical energy, or to delirium tremens.

If God removed the evil passions He would turn men into mangold-wurzels; if He removed the consequences of the evil passions He would turn men into devils. Personally, I am glad He has done

neither; personally, I am driven to a belief in God and in God's Way.

That is what we each mean when we say the Creed: "I believe in God."

People may say, if God is the Author of all things and allows men to take the consequences, and, further, the consequences are so compelling that they force men to be good, that God compels men.

But the consequences are not so compelling.

The drunkard who feels delirium tremens coming on is so obviously not forced to sobriety by the delirium tremens that he often continues a drunkard.

The consequences, therefore, are not God's method, *compelling* men to abandon their evil courses, but are God's voice rebuking and persuading men.

God had to run the risks; if freedom was the very breath of man's being, God could not give them freedom with one hand and take it away with the other. To be human at all is to be free to choose between good and evil.

God had to run the risks. God is very daring. This world is His Great Adventure.

*God presented men with the raw materials of a world, and said to them: "You may turn this raw stuff into the Kingdom of Heaven or into the Kingdom of Satan, you may mould it into heaven or break it into hell.* You will only be happy and full of life if you choose heaven, but, if you like, you may choose hell."

What, then, is the Kingdom of Heaven? [1]

[1] It is sometimes objected by Atheist-Socialists that the very phrase "Kingdom" suggests a tyrant God in the skies

The Kingdom of Heaven is a freely chosen Fellowship of God-inspired men and women, or, in other words, the Kingdom of Heaven is a Commonwealth where God's will is done.

Therefore, the Kingdom will have come when God's will is done.

The Empires of Egypt, Babylon, Syria, Macedonia, Greece, Rome, and even the Kingdom of Israel —in spite of many strands of goodness inwoven in their structure—could hardly be mistaken for the Kingdom of God; they have sometimes been mistaken for the Kingdom of Satan. For entwined with their very roots were slavery, greed, inequality and blasphemous oppression. And how could this be otherwise, when of the individuals who composed these groups some gave themselves to pride and tyranny and the vices that are their handmaids, and others were apathetic and indifferent to these things!

But God had not left Himself without witness.

compelling His unwilling subjects below, and that therefore "the Kingdom of God" cannot be identified with the free Commonwealth which they desire for mankind. This is because they are saturated with the pseudo-Christian idea of a capricious Jehovah-Tyrant, and not with the Christian idea of a God who, although transcendent, is yet immanent among men, inspiring and encouraging more often than compelling. This Kingdom is often actually called Commonwealth and Citizenship in the N.T. (Eph. ii. 19, Phil. iii. 20; note the Greek). The Christ rejected the Benevolent-Tyrant idea of a Kingdom in His third temptation, and urged its Coming through the God-inspired energy and initiative of men. This point will be fully dealt with in my "People's Life of Jesus," now appearing as a weekly serial in *The Crusader*, price 2d., 23 Bride Lane, London, E.C.

In all nations there were a few who feared God and loved their neighbours, and fought many a losing battle against the stream of indifference and oppression.

In spite of these heroic adventurers, God not only seemed to have run the risks, but to have been defeated. Was there anything more that God could do to counter the apparent defeat without destroying man's freedom, that is, without tearing up His original plan and admitting His incapacity to create men and women ?

God, who at divers times and in divers places had sent His prophets into the world, now in these last times has sent His Son that the world through Him might be saved, for " I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men to Me."

CHAPTER VI

# NATIONS AND THE INTERNATIONAL IN THE GOSPELS

Our Lady, looking forward to the gospel of her Son, sings, " He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted them of low estate." The message of John, the herald of Jesus, was summed up by the Gospels in the saying, " Every valley shall be exalted and every hill brought low."

Our Lord demanded so complete a transformation of the spirit of the nation, lifting the unclassed, the outcast, the despised, and abasing the proud and the " people who count," that He spoke of a future in which the last should be first and the first last : that is to say, He preached the gospel of human equality—the fatherhood of God and the comradeship of men. In Him—that is, in our essential human nature as interpreted by Him—there would be neither bond nor free. God is no respecter of persons. As Pagan poets had sung, " we are also His offspring." His attitude towards the great world that lay outside Palestine is significant. He was proclaimed as " the Light to lighten the nations," for He revealed to them the secret of national well-being, namely, the turning from greed, brutality and aggrandisement to neighbourliness

and justice, thereby transforming themselves into God's Co-operative Commonwealth.

That Christ looked beyond the boundaries of His own nation towards a Divine International can hardly be denied. God, who had made of one blood all nations, had sent His Son to weld them into unity. So much was this so, that in the opening of His campaign in Nazareth Christ scandalised His countrymen by reminding them that God had favoured the despised foreigner above themselves, the inference of course being that the foreigner must be included in that new world to which He and His hearers were looking forward. The centurion at Capernaum, tolerated by the Pharisees as a convert and a benefactor, is exalted above them all: "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." How offensive this comparison between the merely tolerated foreigner and the children of Abraham must have seemed to the unctuous patriots who heard Him! Of the ten lepers who are healed, Christ notes that it is the foreigner who returns to give glory to God. There is the story of the good Samaritan, with its depreciation of the Jewish priest and the Jewish Levite and its praise of the foreigner who alone proved the real neighbour.

For an all-too-current idea of His time, namely the triumph of the Jewish nation at the Judgement, and the discomfiture of all the rest, He substitutes a judgement of all the nations on a basis of equality.

The Good News of the Coming Kingdom shall be preached in *all* the world for a witness unto *all* nations.

Many Jewish patriots shall say, "We did eat and drink in thy presence, and thou didst teach in our streets; and he shall say, I tell you, I know not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham. and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the Kingdom of God, and yourselves cast forth without. And they shall come from the east and west, and from the north and south, and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God."

It is hardly necessary to labour the point that the Christ who welded together the Jew and the Gentile, and was the giver of freedom to the whole world, is therefore, without question, the Internationalist. But as Mr. S. C. Carpenter, speaking of the Christ, says, "in order to be a good internationalist, you must first be a good nationalist." [1]

Christ's Co-operative Commonwealth was to be no mere cosmopolitan world, secured at the expense of national variety, with all natural boundaries gone and all natural groupings, such as the family, obliterated. There was room in His teaching for especial friendships—Saint John, Saint Peter, Saint Mary Magdalene; room also for that passionate love of country that wrung from Him the cry, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate." He, the Saviour of the

[1] *Christianity according to S. Luke*, p. 221; S.P.C.K., 1919.

world, yet felt that His own immediate mission must be to His own countrymen: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." He warns Palestine that if it forgets that it holds the ideal of the Kingdom of God in trust for the whole world, that ideal will be taken away from it and given to nations bringing forth the fruits thereof, but He desires intensely that the privilege of being the pioneers of the Kingdom shall belong to His own people. Palestine for Him is blessed among the nations, the salt of the whole earth, but it is His very patriotism that drives Him on to add, "if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men."

The so-called patriots of to-day will never understand this.[1] For a real love of England they substitute Imperial bluster. I venture to quote some words of mine from *England a Nation* (*Papers of the Patriots' Club*). "His were neither the calumnies of the cynical cosmopolitan nor the flatteries of the Jerusalem-right-or-wrong Pharisees, but His the love that dared praise and worship, and therefore dared denounce. I suppose He was what would now be called a pro-Gentile—that is, one who cares too deeply for His country to stand by speechless while her enemies are betraying her to some money-grubbing gang of mongrel financiers. In His spirit is that challenge of Ibsen's *Enemy of the People*, whose voice rings clear above the

[1] P. 242; Brimley Johnson, 1904.

execrations of the mob, 'I love my native town so well, I would rather ruin it than see it flourishing upon a lie.'"

But if He was a nationalist as well as an internationalist, how account for the fact that He not only did not join the nationalist party in Palestine in its war against the Empire, but actually foretold the inevitable disaster that awaited it?

Just as there is an internationalism which despises the nations and is so far evil, so there is a nationalism which is wrongly motived, being purely parochial and pharisaic. If a nation in resisting an empire treats all other peoples as pariah dogs and outsiders, and fights in order that it may itself become the dominant empire of the world, its cause is accursed of God. This was precisely the case of the predominant nationalism of our Lord's own day. The nationalist party, later known as the Zealots, urged on the rising against their imperial oppressors with the idea of creating a victorious Palestinian empire, which would dominate the civilised world. They regarded the rest of mankind with contempt. They alienated everybody. They would bestow upon these Gentile dogs the inestimable benefit of their absurd Kultur: "Jerusalem über alles" might well have been their battle-cry. It is hardly surprising that the Christ should have dissociated Himself from these would-be imperialists. That He did this in no way disproves His patriotism.[1]

[1] It is significent that the authorities responsible for the erection of that unfortunate London monument to the great

We have shown His particular love for His country, and it must always be remembered that the religion which sprang from Him has been the nursing mother of nations.[1]

The Gospels, then, suggest this interplay of nationalism and the international as essential to the building up of the World to Come. The flags of Nations and the flag of the International should therefore be lifted up together as the ensigns of the Faith in Christian churches.

patriot, Nurse Cavell, refused to inscribe her dying words upon it: "Patriotism is not enough."

[1] The Bishop of Chelmsford, in his monthly letter in the *Chelmsford Diocesan Chronicle*, January, 1922, urges that the Incarnation does not only assert the right of the individual to freedom, for along with this assertion "there was developed the rights of peoples to be free. It was for the assertion of this great principle that we went to war. . . . Missionaries in India, in Egypt, had to explain to their flocks why England was at war. They explained it as fighting for freedom. . . . Freedom is so righteous a thing that England is fighting to maintain it. If it is so great a possession for England, is it not so for Egypt, for India? Mixed with mere political propaganda and often with sordid motives, the unrest in many parts of the world is not altogether a thing to be deplored. It is a great movement towards the ideals of Bethlehem. Often those in the movement may be ignorant even of Bethlehem, but the love of freedom is of God, *for man is man* because he was made a free agent. Hence Statesmen, if wise, will not strive to crush national aspirations but to guide and direct them. Granted that for full self-government, such as Australia or Canada possesses, India, for instance, may not be ready. Yet we, as Christians, must pray that those in authority may grasp that only on the underlying principles of the Incarnation can they build with safety. Politics to the Christian must surely be simply a means for bringing in the Kingdom of God on earth."

CHAPTER VII

## POLITICS AND SALVATION.

We have now shown that Christ preached the new world to come here on earth, a divine International formed of the redeemed nations: that its coming has been hindered by our apostasy: that God gave us free will in order that we might establish it by an act of our own choice, rather than it should be forced upon us by compulsion from the heavens. It has been suggested that our personal salvation is bound up with the destinies of this new world and our attitude towards it. If this is so, it will be seen how ludicrous is the advice of Mr. Lloyd George to the effect that the Churches must not mix themselves up in political matters, and the petition of the crowds who came into Thaxted on Empire Day, 1921, to the effect that the clergy of Thaxted must be forbidden to preach politics from Thaxted pulpit. I pointed out to one of the prime movers in this affair that politics, according to the English dictionaries, means the conduct of public affairs, and asked him if he really meant that the clergy of Thaxted should be silent in the pulpit as to the conduct of public affairs. I have kept his answer, in which

he says that this is precisely what he does mean, and his reason is that it upsets people and is likely to empty the church.

Here, then, is a clear and definite issue between the people who believe that the Christian Religion consists in a few private negatives, such as: don't swear, don't drink too much, don't be unkind to your grandmother; with a positive addition or so: go to church, or chapel, say your prayers, be respectable—most of these things excellent but inadequate—and the people who are passionately convinced that the Christian Religion is concerned with the whole of life and must revolutionise not only individuals but families, not only families but nations, and that there is no nook or cranny of life, whether public or private, with which religion has not to do. Between these two parties there can be no truce, no possibility of compromise.

Along with this view of religion as purely an affair of churchgoing and a handful of domestic virtues, there goes a theory about the rights of parishioners which is equally absurd. It is argued that those who happen to live in a certain area, and to have had a little water sprinkled on them, when they were too young[1] to know what was being done, even if they never go near a church and repudiate everything that Christ lived and

[1] To enlist children from their earliest infancy in Christ's Army to fight for His Kingdom, that they may be brought up in the atmosphere of the Camp, taught its traditions and strengthened by its sacraments of hope, is all to the good; but infant baptism, treated *as magic and with no intention of following it up*, is a blasphemous fable.

died for, have every bit as much right to dictate what shall be its policy, and the conduct of its services, who shall or who shall not be its officers, as those who are trying to follow Christ and to shape their own lives and the world in which they live according to His standards, who work for their Church and are willing to give their life for their religion. This pernicious heresy is not going to be discouraged, to say the least of it, by the new Church Constitution, which gives equal rights and powers of election to the person who never darkens a church door, who is often practically an atheist, who would certainly crucify Christ if He were to appear in our midst—which gives such a man or woman equal powers with those who are trying to follow Christ and who are working hard for their Church, so long as these persons have undergone a magic sprinkling when unconscious, and can call themselves "C. of E." by the simple process of being too slack to attach themselves to any other denomination.[1]

The objective of these people is a contradiction to the objective of the followers of Christ. It was a follower of His who said, "I could wish that even I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren and companions' sake," while they, like the sons of Zebedee whom He rebuked, want the

[1] What irony that this new law should be the outcome of a "Life and Liberty" movement; yet thousands of enthusiasts who have supported this movement must have genuinely longed for liberty and could not have foreseen the chains that their leaders were, themselves perhaps unconsciously, forging for them.

best seats on His right hand and on His left in His Kingdom.

It was Christ Himself who warned men that who seeks to save his soul shall lose it, and he who forgets about his own soul's safety in the service of God's Kingdom, the same shall save it.[1]

Our opponents say, "Confine your preaching to the subject of personal salvation." But what is salvation?

The Greek word used means "soundness," the Latin word is "salus," meaning "soundness" or "health." Salvation means "saving health." It means not so much salvation from punishment in the future as salvation from sin in the present. We are told, "He hath saved us from our sins." If we are saved from our sins, incidentally we shall be saved from a considerable amount of punishment, for God's punishment is remedial. But it is only when men begin to hate sin more than they fear punishment that they are beginning to be saved. Only then do they begin to be in a state of salvation. For salvation is not so much a sudden act as a state. That is why we say, "I heartily thank my heavenly Father that He hath called me to this state of salvation," and in the Acts the Revised Version correctly translates, "there were added to the Church daily such as were being saved," instead of "such as were saved." In another place Our Lord says, "Thy faith hath saved thee" or "Thy faith hath

[1] The Greek term used means more than physical life, and is translated "soul" in the course of this very chapter.

made thee whole," for wholeness or health is the same thing as salvation.

The people who claim the Dictatorship of the Parishioner, or even of the Ratepayer, are still in the Mid-Victorian fog of ideas, and imagine "salvation" as a fire escape, whereas it is in reality "soundness," health, a state of being.

What, then, is this health of the soul to which we have to attain? The body is healthy when it is at unity within itself. Disease is disunity, death is dissolution: when every part of the body is functioning in correspondence with all the rest, there is soundness or salvation. So also with the soul. Plato has described the soundness or salvation of the soul to consist in the harmony of its various desires. The saved man is the man at unity within himself. But this unity can only be secured, according to Christ and the Christian Religion, by the soul looking out beyond itself to God and its neighbours and relating itself to these. The soul cannot be saved in isolation. It cannot attain its own inward harmony and soundness by some selfish or idiotic[1] quest of a comfortable heaven. It shrivels. Disease and dissolution await it along that path. It gets by giving. It grows into control and harmony by forgetting its own immediate safety. By being willing to lose its life, it gains it. By flinging itself away, it gains the life which is eternal.

Here again must be noted the contrast between

[1] "Idiotic" comes from a Greek word meaning "one who lives in isolation from his fellows."

the theology of the "parishioner" and of the Christian. For what is "Eternal Life"? The last survivors of the Mid-Victorian wreckage still believe that salvation means escaping everlasting discomfort and securing a comfortable continuance of existence that shall be everlasting. There is an immeasurable difference between everlasting existence and eternal life. The man who is really becoming alive would rather have one crowded hour of glorious life than a mere existence that goes on for ever. We believe that this splendid life, once attained, will as a fact be continuous and everlasting, but the phrase translated "everlasting" does not refer to the quality of the life, but to its quantity.

As a fact, in the Gospels there seems to be no mention of everlasting life or of everlasting death.[1] The Greek phrase is *aionios*; scholars are divided on its meaning and only united in holding that it cannot mean everlasting.[2] As a fact, the New Testament uses a word that does mean everlasting, viz. *aidios*; it occurs twice only, once in reference

[1] If it be asked, "Do you not believe in a world beyond the grave and the permanent existence of the individual?" I should reply that I believe in both, but not on the authority of the Gospels, for the ideas do not occur clearly in them, but on the authority of the Church, i.e. on the collective conviction and intuition of Christendom.

[2] Nothing astonished me quite so much in reading the criticisms of a book of mine embodying these ideas as the assertion of certain of my critics that Jesus cared more about everlasting life, by which they meant the life beyond, than He did about the Kingdom of God on earth. The criticism contains the most glaring *non sequitur* that I have met with for many years, as the above paragraphs will show.

to God, once to everlasting chains. A number of writers, including the late Dean Farrar and a much more important critic, Andrew Jukes,[1] translate the term *aionios*, "age-long or belonging to an era," but not having any definite convictions about the coming of this Golden Age, they rather miss the point and are content with such expressions as "Æonial or Age-long life"; the objection to this is that it lays stress on the term "age," as if the life were bounded by duration of time. But if they are right in supposing it the life of an age, it is evident that Eternal Life means the life which will be experienced by the living in the coming age, and Eternal Death would be the unhappy state in which those who are excluded from the Commonwealth find themselves.

It is quite certain, then, that the term Eternal Life does mean this much—the life of the coming time. But it means much more. Professor Mahaffy and other scholars have proved that Galilee was saturated with Greek ideas and was largely bilingual, and therefore the term "eternal," which had come to refer to the quality of life[2] rather than to its quantity, would be used in this particular significance by the Christ and His contemporaries. Our Lord always used ideas at what I might call the high-water mark of their meaning, or rather, there would be an added richness in His use of them; and even if Mahaffy has over-

[1] In his *Restitution of all Things*.

[2] Plato used it in this sense, i.e. as life in its fullness, unbounded by time.

rated the influence of Platonic ideas in Palestine, this conception of life is by no means alien to the spirit of the Old Testament itself, for "life" in the Jewish tradition included "everything that contributes to the full activity of man's nature." If the reader will study the New Testament passages in which the phrase occurs, and have at the back of his mind the conception of the Kingdom, he will inevitably be led to the conclusion that Eternal Life as taught by the Christ is a phrase that should be translated "Overmastering Life," not, be it noted, the life of one who happens to find himself alive at the time of the dawn of the Golden Era, but of one who gives himself up to it, body, mind and spirit, absorbed in the love of God and the love of men. No words can adequately express Eternal Life, but it can be felt and known even here in this alien age, through which we pass as strangers and pilgrims, although in its fullness it belongs to the age to come.

"The blessedness of the new age will consist in abundance of life, which has always appealed to the Hebrew mind as the highest good. The idea of life, as we find it in the Old Testament, includes in itself not only length of days, but joy, prosperity, peace, righteousness—everything that makes up the full activity of man's nature. God Himself was the Living One, and men attained to the true life according as they knew Him and entered into fellowship with Him. In the higher regions of Old Testament thought, life and communion with God are interchangeable terms. The apocalyptic

writers develop the Old Testament idea, and at the same time give it a special direction. They think of life as reserved for the coming age, of which it will constitute the chief blessing. So comprehensively, indeed, are all the future privileges summed up in the word 'life' that it is often used as equivalent to the Kingdom itself.[1] The new community will consist of the 'living.' The present age with its evils and limitations will give place to the condition of 'life.' Sometimes this condition is further defined as 'eternal life,' to distinguish it from the unreal and transitory life of the present. It is eternal because it belongs to the eternal age—the enduring order of the future Kingdom."[2]

It will now be seen that the people who urge us to confine our preaching to the salvation of the soul and to make no mention of politics are in reality forbidding us to save souls. They are, all unconsciously, the deadliest enemies of personal salvation, for the soul can only become "sound" or "saved" when, forgetting self, it is merged in the love of God and the comradeship and service

[1] People sometimes say the Fourth Gospel is in antagonism to the Synoptics, in that it substitutes "Eternal Life" for the "Kingdom": but if the two ideas are interchangeable, no such antagonism need exist. Irenæus, a disciple of Polycarp, who was a personal friend of John, is saturated with the thoughts of the Fourth Gospel and yet an ardent believer in the coming Kingdom on earth.

[2] The above quotations are from Scott, *The Kingdom and the Messiah*, pp. 26–7; cf. Burkitt's *Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, and Schürer's *Jewish People*.

of its fellows, in the battle for that new world wherein dwelleth righteousness.

But, it may be objected—there are many people working for that new world who have not taken the trouble to reform themselves. Many who fuss about the public good are themselves public nuisances. Personal reformation is therefore after all essential.

If the objective of personal reformation be "getting to heaven when you die," your reformation will be a failure, and if you do succeed in casting out a devil, you will probably find that there will rush into your soul seven other devils worse than the first. Or rather, you will be so filled with conceit that you probably will never find that out: other people will find it out for you.

If your objective is not to get yourself to heaven when you die, but to get heaven for other people while you live, then the personal reformation, which is of course essential, will be a healthy and vigorous affair, resulting in the grace and generosity of the soul which will be a conquest of all the deadly sins that have threatened to destroy both yourself and your fellows.

Perhaps the mention of sin needs some explanation nowadays. For there are people, in desperate revolt against our Victorians, who say there is no such thing, or that at any rate the less we think about sin the better. It must be admitted that the nineteenth-century fashion of thinking of oneself as a miserable worm was not only exaggerated, but a trifle paralysing. The pendulum

has now swung to the other extreme with a vengeance.

It is only the dead and degenerate who have no sense of sin; the living are always alive to their sins. Nowadays people pride themselves on having no sense of sin; they consider pride a virtue and humility a degradation. But they are shallow and rubbishy people, and their ideas are a passing affectation. A person numbed with frost is in danger of dying in a kind of drowsy comfort; his easy sense of having no bodily ailment is not a sign of life but of death. His gradual recovery, his awareness of bodily ailment means acute torture; but this awakening, or what might be called "bodily repentance," is his only chance of bodily salvation; so also with the soul. Fat and drowsy satisfaction with self is death, while dissatisfaction, humility, repentance—harnessed to a keen desire for something better—is life.[1]

Religion and Revelation are sometimes, perhaps always, the intensifying of what is most natural and human; and this is because the origin of the natural and human is God, and because God in coming into the human world was coming "unto His own," to rediscover among men their proper nature, infusing humanity with a new life (grace), but a life not alien to those traces of the good life, and of the true human nature, which, however corrupted by sin, did originally come from that same God who now transforms us. We can sometimes, therefore, get some hint of the naturalness

[1] Cf. the Thaxted Tract, *Sins and their Cure.*

and what has been called the "divine common sense" of religious teaching, by considering the human affections at their intensest moments. Search the best love-poetry of nations, or remember your own experience in the case of great friendships. In the human heart, when most alive and responsive, there is a curious blending of pride and humility —the person is proud to love and be loved, but there is also a keen sense of unworthiness and abasement. Some very modern people who have lost religion have lost this too, and of course, when the mainspring is broken the power of testing is gone; one can only think of them regretfully as "creatures that once were men."

Perhaps it is not altogether their fault; it may have begun in a disgusted revolt against a Calvinism masquerading as Christ's religion, which could talk of nothing but sin, and gloom and death.

But whatever the crank and the clever abnormal persons may feel about humility being out of date, ordinary human beings will know that "Lord, I am not worthy!" is not the cry of the degenerate, but of the regenerate.

God teaches us through Holy Church that it is only "the rotter" who refuses to own up. The fool in Bernard Shaw's play was always saying "I never apologise," but even Bernard Shaw considers him a fool for saying so. Such common sayings as "getting it off one's chest" and "confession is good for the soul" show the way the wind blows with ordinary healthy people. The Church teaches that to be always justifying oneself

is the act of an idiot and that confession is the act of a man.

The fact is, that although human nature is not so white as it is painted by the modernists, it is certainly not so black as it is painted by the worldlings and their allies, the next-worldlings. The worldlings, when you suggest that the present system is pretty devilish, reply cheerfully that it is human nature, and that it is ridiculous to appeal to the generous instincts of mankind. It only shows you to be a fool or a dreamer. The next-worldlings, who are, by the way, generally ardent supporters of the present capitalist world, are of the same mind, and hold that a man will only reform himself through fear or the application of the fire-insurance argument to his soul. You must appeal to him to take out a policy in heaven. This is a libel on human nature. Men's souls are not the niggardly, calculating, shrunken things that the ordinary revivalists would have us think. It is a libel on the soldier to assert that he will only fight to save his own skin. It is a libel on the Christian soldier to assert that he will only fight to salvage his own soul. Man loves generous adventure. He loves the great adventure for God and the New World. The soldier will keep himself fit for the battle. Give a man the ideal of God's battle, and he will begin to want to keep his soul fit. You have, by giving him an object, made it worth while. To go about trying to reform the world without even desiring, by the grace of the good God, to re-create oneself, is to become

a nuisance to one's neighbours and to fail in the very object of one's desires. A sound world cannot be built by shoddy people. But to attempt to save one's own soul apart from the love of neighbours and the battle for God's world which is to be, is inevitably to lose it. Politics,[1] in the larger and the accurate sense of the term, are therefore essential. Without politics there is no salvation.

[1] "Politics" is defined by the English Dictionaries as "the science of public affairs." As Christ's religion has been shown to be the interplay of the individual soul and the public weal, it is essentially political. The fact that certain sordid party hacks use this great science of public affairs to fill their own pockets, to edge themselves or their relations into power, cannot excuse us from taking our part as Christians in that essentially religious science. It may be our duty, at a given moment, to support this or that particular party in so far as it is helping to establish some principle of the Kingdom of God. We must never do so blindly or uncritically. Such support does not make one a "party man," which no Christian has a right to be.

CHAPTER VIII

## ON LIVING PEACEABLY WITH ALL MEN.

"You have promised definitely that you would 'maintain and set forward as much as lieth in you quietness, peace and love, among all Christian people.'"

Thus writes the Bishop of Chelmsford [1] to me, suggesting that the refusal to remove the revolutionary flags from Thaxted Church only causes dissension and strife, rousing ill-will and producing sorrow and anxiety in the minds of some of the real saints of God in England to-day. On the high ground of Christian charity, he asks me once more "to remove the flags and to cease to use provocative language."

The Bishop's words are significant, not only because he is my Diocesan, but because probably he voices the opinion of the majority within the Churches to-day. Into the nature of episcopal authority I do not wish to enter at length, as it has been carefully discussed by me in *The Uplifting*

[1] The Bishop of Chelmsford has, on the other hand, strongly protested against those who deny the right of bishops and priests to bring politics into the pulpit, understanding, of course, by the phrase, politics in the larger sense, as described in my last chapter.

*of the Son of Man,*" [1] but I would remind my readers that a priest at his Ordination does not promise the blind obedience of a conscript, but the intelligent response of a fellow-servant. There are some things which no bishop has the right to demand and no priest the right to give.

On the face of it, the Bishop's appeal to me not to be provocative, and to live peaceably with my fellow-Christians, seems reasonable enough. But who are my fellow-Christians? A parishioner who tells me that the majority of his fellow-countrymen ought to be drowned? Another who urges that locked-out miners should be massacred with machine guns? Yet another, who denies Christ by setting up "my country right or wrong" in His place? All these are members of the Church of England, all have been baptised into Christ—possibly by sprinkling, and certainly by rate-paying: they are all "parishioners!"

Am I not to obey my promise made in the same Ordination Service "to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine, contrary to God's word; and to use both public and private monitions" to those who need them? Surely it will not be contended that the murderous thoughts of these people are not erroneous, even if unfortunately they be too common to be considered strange? If as priests we try to drive away erroneous doctrines, "constantly speaking the truth, boldly rebuking vice and patiently suffering for

[1] Published by the *Catholic Crusade*. To be obtained from Thaxted.

the truth's sake," and if in the process we provoke and offend certain parishioners, are we breaking that other Ordination promise that we live peaceably with all Christian people, and especially those committed to our charge?

For this promise concerning peace must mean something. What, then, does it mean? There may be some clergy who cause strife in a parish because they are themselves backbiters, quarrelsome, bad-tempered, avaricious, miserly, always asserting their personal rights, touchy, priggish and insolent: such priests undoubtedly break this promise. I would leave it to my parishioners, and to my bitterest opponents among them, to declare whether the strife in Thaxted is due to my private bearing or to my public ideals.

Although I do not for a moment contend that every man who is unpopular because of his ideals must needs be a follower of Christ, for his ideals may be wrongheaded or he cantankerous in his preaching of them, yet it is important to consider whether Christ was a popular leader living peaceably with the religious world of His day.

As a boy He increased in favour with God and man; as a prophet the common people heard Him gladly; He is welcomed at the village feast; the halt, the maimed and the blind throng Him; the bruised reed He will not break; the outcast, the unhappy and the oppressed found in Him a refuge. In all the page of history there is no figure more sympathetic, imaginative or understanding, and yet the Gentle Jesuism of the modern hymn

and the modern preacher is almost a caricature of Him.

Just as in God there are the gentle valleys and the stark mountains, the raging storms and the delicate shells of minutest workmanship, so in the God incarnate and the complete man there is not only this extraordinary gentleness but an anger almost beyond description.

His forerunner, who was himself arrested for provocative preaching, contrasts his own baptising with water with the terrific baptism with fire which will follow. Our Lord is filled with anger [1] at the Sabbatarians of the day. He announces that those who oppose His Good News to the poor will be cast into outer darkness.[2] It will be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgement than for those cities which reject Him and His propaganda. The new world which He preaches will grind its opponents to powder.[3] To the nations which have refused to recognise Him in the hungry, the naked, the prisoners and the foreigners, He will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." [4] He has come to cast fire on the earth and is eager to see it kindled.[5] He brings not peace but a sword. His gospel will break up families, setting the son against the father and the mother against the daughter.[6] The religious leaders of His day are described by Him as hypocrites, fools, their inward parts full of greed and wickedness; they

[1] Mark iii. 5. [2] Mark viii. 12. [3] Luke xx.
[4] Luke xii. 49. [5] Matthew x. 34. [6] Luke xii. 53.

are as graves which appear not, whited sepulchres, murderers, children of hell.[1]

His lawful king He calls "that fox."[2] Whoever is not prepared to hate his father and mother cannot be His disciple. The rich man is described as going to hell and the poor man to Paradise. With a scourge of small cords and infuriating language He expels the profiteers from His Father's Temple.

The Bishop of Chelmsford urges that my revolutionary teaching by word of mouth and by symbol (the flags) only causes dissension and strife among my parishioners. Was it not Wesley who said "The world is my parish"? In any case the world was Christ's parish, and it can hardly be denied that His revolutionary preaching caused dissension and strife amongst His parishioners. Could the Bishop of Chelmsford have blamed them when he considers the extreme provocation, examples of which have been given above? Christ's teaching by word of mouth and by symbol provoked them to madness and goaded them to destroy Him.

But my critics will say the murderers of Jesus were scoundrels such as the world has never seen before or since. No greater mistake could be made, as sincere preachers of every school of thought are always pointing out. The whole burden of our Lord's accusation against them was not that they were sinners above the rest, but that they were the ordinary respectable church-going pietists who were able to thank God that they were not

[1] Matthew xxiii. [2] Luke xiii. 32.

as other men were, who kept the current religious rules of their day and were upholders of the current morality. So much so that the respectable *Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible* (one volume edition) ventures upon a mild defence of the Pharisees and of "their spiritualising tendencies," and reminds us of "the claims of the Pharisees on our interest and gratitude"! It was a combination of the ordinary worldlings and next-worldlings who brought Him to His death. The business man and the churchman alike accused Him of being inspired by the devil. They charged Him with drunkenness.[1] They set spies on Him, they hounded on the mob against Him, they made Him an outlaw and a tramp, they libelled Him, they scoffed at Him, not because they were atheists but because they were lovers of money.[2] So great was the scandal caused among pietistic people, considered the real saints of God in His day, that He was obliged to exclaim, "Blessed is he who is not scandalised at Me."[3]

There are people who say that this was all very well for Christ, but that we must not presume to follow Him here; but in that case a person who admired His grim strength and fierce denunciations might say, "I cannot presume to follow Him in His gentleness, His delicacy and His sympathy." Surely the whole Christ is to be the model for Christians, or rather, it is not so much that Christ is our model or example—as if we were strangers trying awkwardly to adapt ourselves to a character

[1] Luke vii. 34. [2] Luke xvi. 14.
[3] Luke vii. 23. Greek *skandalizo.*

fundamentally alien to our own—but that we, when we turn to Him, are turning to One who is the highest expression of our race, to Him "in whom we live and move and have our being." Now if this is the truth, just in so far as we do partake of His spirit, in however slight a degree, we shall present to the world something of that paradox of gentleness and fierceness that is the characteristic of our Leader. This will arouse in many that fury of ill-will, that dissension and strife which modern Christians so much deplore, or was Christ mistaken when He said, "If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of His household"?

CHAPTER IX

## THE WISDOM OF THE FLAGS.

It has been shown in this book that the origin and meaning of the three flags are Christian, but because the Christian religion has been for so long perverted and misunderstood it was necessary to recall our readers to its original shape and legitimate development. I have shown that the Christ's objective was a Golden Era here on earth, founded in justice and the grace of God; that because it was to be the era of fully grown men with will and initiative, and not of chessmen moved hither and thither about the board of life by a Divine Chess-player, the coming of this era has been delayed in the mercy of the true God, who wills the co-operation of man in the fulfilment of His designs. It has been shown that God created us that we might worship Him in the Commonwealth of His designing and our choice, and further, that this Commonwealth is to be no mere flat, unvariegated world, but the rich harmony of a Community of families and nations.

If, then, this "world politic" be the object of the Christ, the attempt to forbid us to preach politics from the pulpit becomes ridiculous, and it is only by the soul acquiring a generous political

outlook that it can be saved. The truth will always scandalise numbers of people, but although peace is of infinite value, it must not be peace at any price, but the peace of God which passes understanding.

There are people who would question the wisdom of placing any flags in church, whether they be emblems of nation, empire or commonwealth. Among them may be persons who object to all visible and material expression of religion. As these persons, if they were consistent, should equally object to the Incarnation, i.e. the expression of the invisible God in a visible and material body, to the church in which the flags are placed, i.e. a visible and material embodiment of the soul of man, and to their own bodies, i.e. a visible and material expression of their invisible and immaterial selves, their objection need not be treated too seriously. Others object to the flags because they are political and provocative. These critics have found their objections fully dealt with in this book, and if the Christian religion, as we have endeavoured to show, be both political and provocative, this objection falls to the ground.

If the principles for which the flags stand have been shown to be the principles of Christ and His Church, it may still be asked, "Do they appeal to the reason and emotions of man?" for Christ Himself urges us to judge within ourselves what is right, and the tradition of the Church as voiced by an apostle tells us to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good.

The English and Irish flags signify nationality, but nationality is not in our day a popular creed. The imperial cosmopolitanism of Cecil Rhodes and the ex-Kaiser, and the humanitarian cosmopolitanism of Tolstoy and H. G. Wells, are much more likely to find fashionable support. Of these people, who are accustomed to think in millions, I would ask, "If you love not England which you have seen, how can you love the Empire which you have not seen?" and this question would apply to France, to Ireland, to all boundaried nations.

The Imperial cosmopolitan will dislike being classed with his humanitarian brother, for he will say, "So greatly do I love my country that I want her bounds set wider still and wider," while the humanitarian wishes all bounds to be obliterated; but the distinction is not very great. The Imperialist forgets that if you set your bounds too wide and too far they soon disappear altogether over the horizon, and "out of sight is out of mind."

Imperialist patriotism is a contradiction in terms; "it is impossible to have towards a sprawling and indeterminate collection of peoples . . . that sentiment which is evoked in man, rightly or wrongly, by the contemplation of the peculiar customs of his ancestors and the peculiar land of his birth. . . . A thing like an empire, like the Roman Empire, which contained Greeks and Goths and ancient Britons: a thing like the British Empire, which contains Dutchmen and Negroes and Chinamen in Hong Kong, may be a perfectly legitimate object of a certain kind of intellectual esteem, but it is

ludicrous to call it patriotism, or to invoke the ancient deities of the hearth, and the river and the hill." [1]

It was argued on the appearance of *The History of Selborne* that the work must be valueless, because Gilbert White, not having been round the world collecting information, could not have produced a book of the slightest use to the botanist. But it was found that an intense love and understanding of one little patch of earth will give you more insight into the vegetation of the world than do stores of information of the "round the world in eighty days" variety. To know the foliage of the tropics you should first have some insight into the foliage of your native woods at Selborne. That is the truth about patriotism. Gilbert Chesterton, who perhaps more than any other writer living has understood the nature of patriotism, has shown that the greatest love-poetry tends to diminutives. It does not rave about size and space and eternity. So also with the love of country. "An empire has all the characteristics that render national attachments impossible. It is huge and remote, it is everywhere diverse and contradictory. Above all, it is utterly undefined and unlimited": and, "there is one thing that is vitally essential to everything that is to be intensely enjoyed or intensely admired—limitation. Whenever we look through an archway and are stricken into delight with the magnetic clarity and completeness of the landscape beyond, we are realizing the necessity

[1] G. K. Chesterton.

of boundaries. Whenever we put a picture into a frame, we are acting upon that primeval truth which is the value of small nationalities . . . all imperial poetry, even the very best . . . must be psychologically false, for when a man really loves a thing, he dwells not on its largeness, but on its smallness." [1] He concludes the argument by saying that it is not true to say of us that a cosmopolitan humanity is a far-off ideal; it is no ideal at all for us, but a nightmare. Friendship among nations is only possible on the same basis as friendship between individuals. There can be no real friendship without freedom. The idea that an empire absorbs the virtues and varieties of all its conquered dependencies is therefore about as stupid as "the notion of the cannibals that it is possible to become brave by eating a brave man . . . we can no more get the secret of Chinese stoicism by annexing China than a savage could become a good actor by dining on Sir Charles Wyndham." [1] It would not be difficult to show that in proportion as this shallow sentiment of Imperialism has grown, there has grown up alongside of it an increasing disregard of freedom in this country. Our Indian Empire was formed soon after that second great revolution of the English rich against the English poor, by which they deprived them of such lands as still remained to them after the first, namely, the enclosures of the fifteenth century. Victoria was crowned Empress of India about the same time as

[1] *England a Nation*, p. 17.
[2] G. K. C., ibid., p. 30.

little English children were being sold into slavery in English factories and massacred to grind out profits for our pious English philanthropists. The workers were being encouraged to emigrate, as there was no room for them in an England which could no longer be called their country. Empire, then, must be regarded as the disease that is destroying English patriotism, and the flag of Empire can find no place in a Christian building.

National flags, symbolising that love of country which is so marked in the teaching of Christ and His Church, so natural to normal man, will always have their place in Christian churches.

But these flags are not enough, for there are other doctrines as necessary to the life of man as the doctrine of national freedom. These doctrines are the equality of men within the nation and the federation of the nations within a world-commonwealth. The Red Flag, symbolising these truths, restores the balance. We have shown that the doctrine of equality is Christian. Is it reasonable?

Critics cannot seriously think that its advocates are not aware of the fact that one man is taller than another, or cleverer than another, or that he has the advantage of another in physical strength. But the doctrine of equality postulates that all these differences are insignificant compared with the essential unity of that human nature which we all alike share. If people do not feel this truth in their bones, it is difficult to argue with them. For such critics Hilaire Belloc writes: "Its truth is to be arrived at in a negative manner. If men

are not equal, then no scheme of jurisprudence, no act of justice, no movement of human indignation, no exaltation of fellowship, has any meaning. The doctrine of the equality of man is one which, like many of the great transcendental doctrines, may be proved by the results consequent upon its absence. It is in man to believe it—and all lively human societies believe it.

It is certainly not in man to prove the equality of men, save, as I have said, by negation: but it demands no considerable intellectual faculty to perceive that, void of the doctrine of equality, the conception of political freedom and of a community's moral right to self-government disappears." [1]

Gilbert Chesterton has attempted to express the essential equality of man in a parable of the pennies. One is shining and the other tarnished, yet both are of equal value. If the critics can understand how these two coins can count the same, though one is bright and the other dull, "they might perhaps understand how two men can vote the same, though one is bright and the other dull. If, however, they are still satisfied with their solid objection that some men are dull, I can only gravely agree with them, that some men are very dull." [2]

The individual nation must, then, be redeemed from avarice and injustice, and must re-create itself on the basis of the equality of all its members.

[1] *The French Revolution*, p. 22; Home University Library.

[2] *A Short History of England*, p. 203; Chatto & Windus, 1917.

The Red Flag does not only stand for this equality, but also for the federation of nations so redeemed in a world-community. Nations must come of their own free choice to see that their happiness and their divinely appointed destiny lie not in suspicion and rivalry, but in co-operation. The prosperity of men must be built up by the nations freely giving themselves to an international community.

Variety in unity is the fundamental law for the well-being of individuals, of nations and of mankind.

For Christians who have really mastered the meaning of the Faith, this conviction is strengthened by our belief in the Source of our life as a Sociality, God the Trinity, the One in Many and the Many in One. We believe that there is both unity and variety in the Social Being from Whom the world proceeds and in Whom the world is sustained, and that the secret of that Being and of His world is better expressed by the variety in unity of the rich chord than by the thin unit of the solitary note. That this is no mere fanciful interpretation of modern Socialist Christians may be shown by an appeal to history. In the early Christian days, market-porters, dockers, weavers, tanners, etc., who believed in the basis of life as comradeship, fought with violence for this catholic doctrine in fierce opposition to the Emperor, while the Arians, who believed in God as a solitary tyrant in a far-away heaven, too great to come down and sojourn with men, thought Him best represented upon earth by the solitary and all-powerful Emperor,

whose will none might question, and were therefore a party of court flunkeys and flatterers.

Now this doctrine of the nature of God and of His world leads us to believe in nationality and the family, and, indeed, all natural human groupings, not as passing phases in the development of ill-educated peoples, who on attaining their majority will voluntarily abandon nationality for the happy mush of a smooth and undifferentiated international, but in the permanent and eternal value of variety in unity, of the many and the one. We believe that the ultimate international will be created by these natural groups, still aware of the eternal value of their distinct individualities, pouring them into a rich and variegated commonwealth of nations, and, by so doing, not losing themselves in a dull and smooth whole, but actually in comradeship and mutual service gaining immensely in initiative and individuality. The existing internationals—and we greatly prefer the third, with some critical reservations—will have to come to this conviction; otherwise they will be building on a foundation which omits something essential in human nature.

The three flags in Thaxted Church, therefore, are complementary, and symbolise fundamental truths without recognition of which men must perish.

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